



October 26, 2020

**Via E-mail Only, Return Receipt Requested**

Sherman Lohnes, J.D.  
Division Director  
Division of Health Care Facility Licensure and Certification  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
67 Forest Street  
Marlborough, MA 01752

Re: Response to DPH Comments  
Facility: Farren Care Center  
Ref. #: 0926-735

Dear Mr. Lohnes:

Please accept this letter on behalf of Trinity Continuing Care Services – Massachusetts regarding Farren Care Center located at 340 Montague City Road, Turner Falls, MA 01376. We appreciate your staff's time and professionalism in conducting the Department of Public Health's review of the closure plan submitted by Farren on August 17, 2020. The following information is provided in response to the comments included in your letter dated October 14, 2020, and pursuant to 105 CMR 153.023 (D).

As we have previously expressed, the decision to close Farren Care Center was not one we took lightly. Our residents are our top priority. Sadly, after exploring many options over many years, we found that not only will we be unable to provide the level of safety and quality that is required, but also, we would be greatly challenged to provide the level of care our residents deserve.

Two significant issues are driving the decision to close Farren Care Center. Chronic and serious infrastructure issues with the aging physical plant and ongoing workforce

challenges will prevent Farren from continuing to provide safe and effective care required by the residents of Farren.

In compliance with the Department's regulations, please find responses to your comments below, as well as a revised draft closure plan that has been updated accordingly.

1. **Transfer and Discharge:** *The plan states that "Farren Care Center will provide health and other resident information to the receiving location in compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations to ensure continuity of care." The Department is unclear as to what steps the Facility will be taking to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations regarding transfer and discharge. Please update the closure plan to address the requirements below:*

- *The Facility must assess the needs of each resident prior to closure, and work with each resident or their legal surrogate to identify appropriate placement that is consistent with the needs and preferences of the resident.*
- *The Facility must provide and document sufficient preparation and orientation to each resident to ensure safe and orderly transfer or discharge from the Facility. This orientation must be provided in a form and manner that the resident can understand.*
- *The Facility must ensure that each transfer or discharge is documented in the resident's medical record, and appropriate information is communicated to the receiving health care institution or provider.*
- *The Facility must ensure that the information provided to the receiving provider includes at a minimum the following:*
  - *Contact information of the practitioner responsible for the care of the resident; and*
  - *Resident representative information including contact information; and*
  - *Advance Directive information; and*
  - *All special instructions or precautions for ongoing care, as appropriate; and*
  - *Comprehensive care plan goals; and*
  - *All other necessary information, including a copy of the resident's discharge summary, and any other documentation, as applicable, to ensure a safe and effective transition of care.*

**Response:** We are committed to making these transitions as seamless as possible for our residents and their continued care. To provide additional clarity regarding our intent to comply with all state and federal regulations regarding transfer and discharge, the draft closure plan has been updated to reflect the following:

- Farren Care Center will assess the needs of each resident prior to closure and work with each resident or their legal surrogate to identify appropriate placement that is consistent with the needs and preferences of the resident.
- Farren Care Center will provide and document sufficient preparation and orientation to each resident to ensure safe and orderly transfer or discharge from the Facility. This orientation will be provided in a form and manner that the resident can understand.
- Farren Care Center will ensure that each transfer or discharge is documented in the resident's medical record, and appropriate information is communicated to the receiving health care institution or provider.
- Farren Care Center will ensure that the information provided to the receiving provider includes at a minimum the following:
  - Contact information of the practitioner responsible for the care of the resident; and
  - Resident representative information including contact information; and
  - Advance Directive information; and
  - All special instructions or precautions for ongoing care, as appropriate; and
  - Comprehensive care plan goals; and
  - All other necessary information, including a copy of the resident's discharge summary, and any other documentation, as applicable, to ensure a safe and effective transition of care.

2. **COVID-19 Protocols:** *Based on written comments submitted to the Department, and comments made during the public hearing process, the Facility must ensure that documented protocols and procedures are in place to protect residents and staff from COVID-19 during the closure process. For clarity, applicable requirements to be addressed include any requirements currently in place at the federal or state level during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Facility must provide COVID-19 PCR testing to each resident at or about the time of transfer (no more than 72 hours before the time of transfer).*

**Response:** We understand and appreciate the concerns raised during the public hearings regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. As previously stated, we have been fortunate during the pandemic thus far – it truly is a testament to our dedicated staff and how seriously we take protecting our residents from COVID-19. In response to these comments, we commit to the following and have updated the draft closure plan accordingly:

- COVID-19 Protocols:
  - Farren Care Center will continue to abide by visitation policies set forth by the state under the Governor's Emergency Declaration and will continue to allow for visitation in accordance with those policies when safe to do so.
  - Prior to transfer or discharge, Farren Care Center will ensure the resident has a face covering and is properly wearing it.

- Farren Care Center will work with transportation providers to ensure drivers are abiding by COVID-19 precautions including wearing a face mask and disinfection of vehicle interior using EPA approved products for use against SARS-COV-2 between riders.
- Farren Care Center will screen residents for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 daily throughout the transition period and promptly test any symptomatic resident for COVID-19.
- Farren Care Center will provide COVID-19 PCR testing to each resident prior to transfer (no more than 72 hours before the time of transfer). Farren Care Center will not transfer any resident until a negative COVID-19 test result is received.
- Farren Care Center continues ongoing compliance with all CMS and Massachusetts State guidelines to protect residents from COVID-19
- If any resident pending transfer or discharge tests positive for COVID-19, Farren Care Center will immediately suspend resident transfers and seek further guidance and assistance from DPH.

**3. Plan to Ensure Sufficient Staffing Prior to Closure:** *Based on written comments submitted to the Department, comments made during the public hearing process, and the needs of the residents as known to the Department, you must include in your response those steps that the Facility is taking, or will take, to ensure there will be sufficient and competent staffing throughout the closure to meet those needs. Your response must be reflective of all state and federal regulatory requirements for staffing, including 42 CFR 483.35 which specifies that all facilities "... must have sufficient nursing staff with the appropriate competencies and skills sets to provide nursing and related services to assure resident safety and attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of each resident, as determined by resident assessments and individual plans of care and considering the number, acuity and diagnoses of the facility's resident population in accordance with the facility assessment required at §483.70(e)."*

**Response:** Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities' fair and compassionate response to colleagues has bolstered our efforts to ensure that we will have sufficient and competent staffing throughout the closure to meet our residents' needs. Mindful of state and federal regulatory requirements for staffing, we have communicated clearly with and demonstrated support for our staff as we move forward with the voluntary closure process. In addition, to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements, we have established severance options for staff who continue to work at Farren Care Center through the closure process. This will help to ensure Farren Care Center will be able to continue to have sufficient and competent staff to meet the needs of residents throughout the closure process. We have updated the draft closure plan to reflect the following:

- Staff who serve through the closure process through a clearly communicated transition date will be eligible to receive a Severance Agreement. After the final day they are needed at Farren Care Center, their 60-day non-worked paid leave will begin. These 60 days include a 45-day consideration period, during which time they remain employed by Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities and have the right to consider whether to execute the Severance Agreement and General Release. If a staff member executes the severance documents, transitions at the requested time as outlined by Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities, and accepts employment with another facility including (pending State approval) Holyoke Care Center, LLC at what is today Mount Saint Vincent Care Center, they will still collect their severance pay from Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities.

**4. Preparation for Closure:** *Based on written comments submitted to the Department, and comments made during the public hearing process, elected and local officials, and members of the community expressed concern regarding the impact of the closure of the Facility on the community and staff currently employed at the Facility. You must include in your response information regarding the Facility's plan to communicate with the local community regarding closure, including but not limited to, securing the campus after the closure, and detailed information regarding the steps that will be taken to assist facility staff in preparing for closure.*

**Response:**

- Farren Care Center will communicate with local community stakeholders, including setting up a Zoom Town Hall-style meeting and issuing a press release, regarding the closure process. This communication will include the timeline for facility closure and information regarding measures taken to secure and maintain the campus property post-closure.
- Farren Care Center will coordinate with the Sisters of Providence a "Letting Go/Decommissioning" ceremony for residents, colleagues, and those Sisters who work at Farren.
- Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities will provide the Farren Care Center Administrator and Facilities Director with a comprehensive checklist of closure activities.
- Farren Care Center will communicate, through a letter to colleagues and families, the procedures the team will take to close and secure the building and will outline the process by which it will work with the City of Montague to draft a decommissioning study/plan.
- Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities will develop a comprehensive redevelopment study for the Farren property, in partnership with the Town of Montague, which includes a decommissioning plan.

If you have any questions that Edin Thompson, administrator of Farren Care Center, is unable to address, you may contact me directly at [Janice.Hamilton-Crawford@trinity-health.org](mailto:Janice.Hamilton-Crawford@trinity-health.org).

Sincerely,



Janice Hamilton-Crawford  
President, Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities

Cc: E. Kelley, DPH  
M. Callahan, DPH  
W. Mackie, DPH  
S. Carlson, DPH  
H. Hoefler, DPH  
R. Oliver, DPH  
D. Keenan, Trinity



October 26, 2020

## Updated Farren Care Center Draft Closure Plan

(additions indicated in *italic underline*)

### Relocation Assistance, Transfer and Discharge

- If the resident has a legal representative, we mailed a copy of the draft Plan submitted August 17 to that individual and will continue to be available to answer questions.
- Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities is committed to ensuring the needs of our residents continue to be met during and following closure of Farren Care Center. Staffing will be reviewed daily to assure that we are meeting regulatory requirements and the needs of our residents.
- Key Staff:
  - Edin Thompson, Farren Care Center Administrator, is the designated Plan Coordinator. She will work to facilitate the execution of the Plan.
  - The designated Facility Relocation Coordinator ("RC") for relocation assistance is Social Worker Kyle Bousquet.
- Farren Care Center will assess the needs of each resident prior to closure and work with each resident or their legal surrogate to identify appropriate placement that is consistent with the needs and preferences of the resident.
- The DNS or other clinical leader has met individually with each resident (and their representative, if appropriate) to discuss their specific needs and preferences. They have met regularly after the initial meeting to coordinate their transition plan. In some instances, the needs assessment may warrant screening for nursing facility or home care placement, if that is appropriate. In those situations, Farren Care Center will coordinate these activities and communicate with the resident/representative.
- Farren Care Center will provide and document sufficient preparation and orientation to each resident to ensure safe and orderly transfer or discharge from the Facility. This orientation will be provided in a form and manner that the resident can understand.

- Farren Care Center has informed residents that psychological preparation or counseling is available and will provide or arrange for psychological preparation or counseling of each resident as necessary.
- Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities will work closely with Farren Care Center to ensure continuity of care and to support the Farren Care Center team during the voluntary closure process.
- Family and group meetings will be held once a week at two different times until families express they are no longer needed. Any family or resident who expresses a desire to have a private meeting with staff regarding transition will be accommodated with a private meeting.
- Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities and Farren Care Center are currently evaluating skilled nursing facilities in the region for appropriate resident transition, including Mount Saint Vincent in Holyoke, MA. Mount Saint Vincent is currently owned and operated by Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities. Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities is working with iCare Health Network ("iCare"), who is currently under a management agreement for Farren Care Center, to pursue a transfer of ownership of Mount Saint Vincent from Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities to iCare. Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities and iCare are committed to ensuring that any open beds at Mount Saint Vincent are available for current residents of Farren Care Center who choose to transition to Mount Saint Vincent.
- Information on skilled nursing facilities in the region available for appropriate resident transition will be offered when appropriate to each resident/legal representative and will also be made available in the common areas at Farren Care Center. Farren Care Center will have this information available and it will be available at group and individual family meetings.
- At the resident's/representative's request, Farren Care Center will invite representatives from other facilities to meet personally with the resident/representative and anyone they designate to discuss their offerings.
- Once the resident/representative chooses a new facility, Farren Care Center will take care of all arrangements (packing of personal items, transportation, and transfer of records), at no cost to the resident.
- Farren Care Center will provide health and other resident information to the receiving location in compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations and to ensure continuity of care.
- Farren Care Center will ensure that each transfer or discharge is documented in the resident's medical record, and appropriate information is communicated to the receiving health care institution or provider.
- Farren Care Center will ensure that the information provided to the receiving provider includes at a minimum the following:
  - Contact information of the practitioner responsible for the care of the resident; and
  - Resident representative information including contact information; and
  - Advance Directive information; and
  - All special instructions or precautions for ongoing care, as appropriate; and
  - Comprehensive care plan goals; and



- All other necessary information, including a copy of the resident's discharge summary, and any other documentation, as applicable, to ensure a safe and effective transition of care.
- COVID-19 Protocols:
  - Farren Care Center will continue to abide by visitation policies set forth by the state under the Governor's Emergency Declaration and will continue to allow for visitation in accordance with those policies when safe to do so.
  - Prior to transfer or discharge, Farren Care Center will ensure the resident has a face covering and is properly wearing it.
  - Farren Care Center will provide COVID-19 PCR testing to each resident prior to transfer (no more than 72 hours before the time of transfer). Farren Care Center will not transfer any resident until a negative COVID-19 test result is received.
  - If any resident pending transfer or discharge tests positive for COVID-19, Farren Care Center will immediately suspend resident transfers and seek further guidance and assistance from DPH.

### Admissions and Readmissions

Until the Closure Plan is approved by DPH, we will not freeze admissions; however, we will inform prospective admissions that we have filed the Notice of Intent to Close. We will follow all applicable state and federal regulations related to residents who are admitted to the hospital, including applying any applicable bed-holds. Following hospital discharge, should a resident voluntarily wish to transfer to another facility, we will accommodate them, but will continue to readmit any hospitalized patient as required by applicable regulations.

### Medical Records Storage

Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities will ensure the collection and storage of all medical records at the appropriate time. Farren Care Center will collect, catalog and store all medical records upon closure of the Facility and documents will be stored locally with Iron Mountain a national storage firm, through the expiration of applicable state record retention periods.

### Employees

We recognize that this is a difficult time for the employees of Farren Care Center, many of whom have served Farren Care Center and its residents for years. We have provided each with the assurance of continued pay and benefits through the transition and, when the time is right, will provide them with internal and external resources to assist them with identifying another position. In the meantime, we have their commitment to continue to care for our residents with compassion and dedication.

The following activities on behalf of employees have been initiated or are being planned with the appropriate community resources:

- Each employee was provided with a WARN Act notice, ensuring that he or she can rely on continued pay and benefits through the mandated 60-day period.
  - We anticipate that many staff may be needed past the WARN Act date and anticipate that a second WARN Act notice (extending the date) will be issued for some employees.
- Alison Erickson, regional recruiter, has overall responsibility for job placement assistance.
- The following community agencies and resources have or will be contacted to begin a comprehensive transition plan for each employee:
  - The Massachusetts Dislocated Worker Unit;
  - Massachusetts Career Center, and
  - MassHire
- We will be contacting prospective employers (including other affiliates of Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities) in the area to invite them to provide information about employment opportunities to Farren Care Center employees.
- Farren Care Center will have a designated transition communication board where all updates and information will be posted. Employee meetings were initiated on August 17, 2020 and have continued to be scheduled throughout this period. Employees with individual needs will be accommodated through calls, or individual meetings as needed.
- Staff who serve through the closure process through a clearly communicated transition date will be eligible to receive a Severance Agreement. After the final day they are needed at Farren Care Center, their 60-day non-worked paid leave will begin. These 60 days include a 45-day consideration period, during which time they remain employed by Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities and have the right to consider whether to execute the Severance Agreement and General Release. If a staff member executes the severance documents, transitions at the requested time as outlined by Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities, and accepts employment with another facility including (pending State approval) Holyoke Care Center, LLC at what is today Mount Saint Vincent Care Center, they will still collect their severance pay from Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities.

Trinity Health Of New England Senior Communities and Farren Care Center are committed to effectively communicating with residents, their representatives and families, and employees. We will do our best to answer any questions and will continue to provide updates as we have new information to share as we work with residents and their families and with our employees to facilitate an orderly transition.

If you have any questions that Edin Thompson, administrator of Farren Care Center, is unable to address, you may contact me directly at [Janice.Hamilton-Crawford@trinity-health.org](mailto:Janice.Hamilton-Crawford@trinity-health.org).